Dot Lewis
Admin · February 21 ·

Originally called McQuilkinsville, then simply Macksville or Maxville, West Terre Haute was laid out by Samuel McQuilkin on November 22, 1836.

The first building had been put up in 1833, and in 1834 McQuilkin opened a general store on the National Road between present-day Third and Fourth Streets. The store proved useful to those working on the National Road and made McQuilkinsville an important town in the area.

Because of the town's fertile soil, soon people started settling there as vegetable farmers.
John Griggs and his son Edward put up a flour mill in 1867, but the structure was burned in 1870.
The town expanded quickly, with Smith Hinch building a tavern on the National Road and Richard McIlroy building a brick general store and post office in 1872.

In 1894 citizens of the town voted to change its name to West Terre Haute.
The West Terre Haute post office has been in operation since 1899.

Bethany Congregational Church was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2003.

Growth of industry
By 1878, industries included a lumber mill, a cigar factory, and a shingle manufacturer, and the town had grown to a population of 250.

With coal-bearing bluffs immediately to the town's north and west, coal mining became a major industry in the town. By 1906, West Terre Haute had eleven mines in operation, served by both railroads and wagon roads. These mines averaged a daily output of 2,000 tons.

Clay deposits in the town led to the production of clay products including building brick, paving brick, sewer pipe and drain tile. Four separate companies in the area worked in this industry, including the Vigo Clay Company, the Miller Brick Company, Terre Haute Brick and Pipe Company (also known as the Vitrified Brick Company), and the National Drain Tile Company.

Just north of West Terre Haute was a large gravel pit a mile in length at its widest point. The gravel was mainly used in railroad grades.

Due to increased employment opportunities, the population of West Terre Haute increased from several hundred in the 1880s to approximately 3500 by the mid-1890s. To accommodate these new residents and commuters, in 1905 a new bridge was built to cross the Wabash River including tracks for the city's streetcar and interurban line. The Bank of West Terre Haute was established that same year.

Decline of commerce
Beginning in the early 1920s, the coal, clay and gravel industries slowly declined. West Terre Haute became a mainly residential community for factory workers and miners. After the Great Depression, the town's businesses included automobile repair shops and grocers. However, business faded when I-70 was constructed and circumvented the town.

27 7 Shares

Like Share

West Terre Haute

TOAD HOP

This is probably a derogatory place name suggesting a small isolated rural community. Toad Hop is in Vigo County, west of Terre Haute.

1. "Bob Stephen's grandmother told me that some people in West Terre Haute set up a mushroom factory over there and that the mushrooms drew all the toads from around here, so they called the place Toad Hop."

2. "Toad Hop located about 1 mile east of West Terre Haute on the west side of Sugar Creek and south side of Highway 40.

   It got its name from a family by the name of Harris early in the 1800's...above the hill above Toad Hop to the west and a little south. There were regular floods in the area. Old man Harris would look down from atop the hill where his house was located during the floods and say, "The toads are hopping," referring to the Indians."

3. Also story about a little boy that lived there among early settlers-he was always catching toads, he'd call the toads "Toad Hops" the people just adopted it.

4. One of the early settlers-drunkard-would come stumblin home at night. Well, one night he fell drunk right down in the middle of the road. Just as he fell down a toad hopped by right in front of him. He got up and says to himself, "Toad Hop, yep, that's where I live, Toad Hop."

Ronald Baker, Indiana State University
Hoosier Folk Legends (Not yet published)

3/81

Vigo County Public Library Community Affairs File REFERENCE DO NOT CIRCULATE

cc-J.B.C. / - J. Miller - V. Eller
This is Fletcher Gates From Fairbanks Library
West Terre Haute
11-18-1968

A Brief Tour Into Yesteryear

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PAMPHLET FILE

As a slight contribution to the Indiana Sesquicentenial the West Terre Haute Branch Library undertook a project which it felt would be of interest to this general area.

One of the interesting older houses in Vigo County is located on old Highway 40 about one hundred yards west of the Dresser Road in West Terre Haute. The first reference to this property is to be found in a deed issued to a John Hamilton and acknowledged December 1, 1808, but it should be pointed out that the date of this deed is questionable. On April 6, 1821 President James Monroe issued a patent on this property to a Charles Smith, and it remained in the Smith family until August 18, 1847. During the Smith ownership, around 1825, a loan was granted for $490.43, and it is felt that the money obtained was used to construct a house. From an artists drawing, it is known that by 1865 the house looked, with minor changes, the same as it does today.

Mrs. Virgil Eller of West Terre Haute, lived in the house, as a child, with her uncle and aunt, Mr. and Mrs. William Langford, and she reports that 1830 was the generally accepted date for its construction.

Mr. Charles Ray, the well-known authority on pioneer cabins, examined such things as siding, general architecture, window panes, window frames, flooring, iron work, etc., and concluded that the house could very well have been completed about 1830.

Turning briefly to the east side of the Wabash River, the first commercial ferry, capable of holding a wagon and four horses, was established in 1818, making it somewhat easier for the westbound

traveler. Roads were gradually being pushed from Indianapolis westward, and by 1839 the National Road was in use at least as far as Terre Haute. West Terre Haute, or Macksville as it was then known, was literally the jumping off place for Vandalia and St. Louis.

To accomodate the growing number of people coming through Terre Haute "The Eagle and the Lion" was opened about 1817 as a tavern located at First Street and Wabash. It was followed by "The Prairie House," which Chauncy Rose built "away out in the country" at Seventh Street and Wabash in 1839. Before 1840 "The Eagle and the Lion" was taken over by Robert Harrison. The Prairie House was operated until 1841 by Theron Barnum, but then closed until 1849 because it was unprofitable. About this time, 1841, "The Eagle and the Lion" was on the decline, so this left only one inn of consequence in this area, located just east of Seelyville. With a growing stream of travelers this was an absurd situation according to Mr. John Biel. He is inclined to believe that what has been known as the "old Inn." "Harris Home," "Stage Coach Inn" in West Terre Haute, served as a principle inn from a period of 1841 to 1849.

Conjectural yes, but is there anything to bolster this conviction? Good water is of prime importance to both human and horse and this property has always been noted for its pure spring water. Pasturage was extremely important and certainly this area had excellent grazing. Many people of that period opened their homes to the traveler, but on the otherhand it must be borne in mind that the average home, for that period, was barely adequate for the owner and his family. Here was a large house with ample

facilities, and what could be more logical than to open it to the public. Mrs. Eller recalls of having only heard of the house referred to as the "Inn" or "Old Inn."

In 1851 when Richard J. Harris purchased the property it reverted to a private home and remained as such until very recently.

This has been Fletcher Gates from Fairbanks Library

Compiled by F. W. Gates, March 29, 1966

Reference:

Condit, History of Terre Haute.

Borns, Pamp. Fort Wayne Public Library.

Indiana Historical Society - various leaflets.

Illustrated Historical Atlas of Vigo County 1874.

Abstract owned by Mr. and Mrs. James Miller, Terre Haute.

Markle files.

Numerous interviews.

Deed Record 1 Page 215
To John Hamilton
Acknowledged Dec. 1st 1808 Tax deed
date of instrument Nov. 31st 1806

Deed Rec 25 Page 117
President James Monroe To
Charles Smith - Patent
April 16th 1821

Various Charles Smith heirs | mortgage
To | 490.43
Wm. D. Griswold
August 18th 1847

George Broadhurst
To
George Eggleton
Oct 24 - 1849
To
Richard J. Harris
Jan. 20th 1851
To

Reference:

Condit, History of Terre Haute.

Borns, Pamp. Fort Wayne Public Library

Indiana Historical Society - various leaflets

Illustrated Historical Atlas of Vigo County 1874

Abstract owned by Mr. and Mrs. James Miller, Terre Haute.

Markle files

Numerous interviews

Compiled by F. W. Gates, March 24th 1966

President James Monroe To
Charles Smith - Patent
April 6th 1821

Various Charles Smith heirs | mileage = 490.43
To
Wm. D. Griswold
August 18th 1847

George Broadhurst
To
George Eggleton
Oct 24 - 1849
To
Richard J. Harris
Jan. 20th 1851
To
Jacob Butz & George Butz
Feb. 2nd 1865
To
Richard J. Harris
May 18th 1885
To
Jacob W. Miller
Aug. 6th 1845
To
the Harris

West Terre Haute

TITLE — Information Compiled

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TERRE HAUTE, INDIANA
Community Affairs File
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April 26. 62.

Dear Sir I see my Pamplet, from Library, on the "Old Inn" I never heard it called Stage Coach In. But my Grand-mother worked there as a "Hired girl". Cooked made beds for travelers, The water was from spring. and is Correct. now I thought I might pass this along to you as a suggestion, About the "Smiths" — There is an old cemetery I do not know the name of it. But they tell me there are several Smiths buried there. To find it, You go up.

State line to the Juza French home — would have to Park car walk 1/4 mile East back — you might find when the Mr. Smith was born,

you can also go to "the old Slenaker farm. Rail-Road Crossing know as nelson — walk west 1/4 mile — They tell me there use to also be a Post office there years ago, Very few younger folks know of this Cemetery — The Crews Smiths, Phila burns. Were old timers." I only know what my Parents told me — Thanks

Mrs Virgil Eller —

Condit, Blackford · History of Early Terre Haute
1816–1840 Lots - Spencer
West Terre Haute

in speaking of events occurring in 1817, says: "Henry Redford had just erected his house, and it was the first tavern ever opened in Terre Haute. The house was afterwards kept by Robert Harrison and still later by Capt. Wasson." Capt. James Wasson was one of the familiar names of early Terre Haute. He was a native of Connecticut and came here in 1816. He must have had charge of the tavern for a long time as it was familiarly known as the Wasson House. He was a sailor before coming west. He was somewhat brusk in manner, but kind. Some years ago in tracing out the exact date of the first organization of a Presbyterian church in Terre Haute, by Rev. David Monfort, I found the following record in an old trustee book. After setting forth the date of the organization, and election of elders with their names, it stated that "Messrs. William C. Linton, John Britton, and Capt. James Wasson were elected trustees." This was in 1828. Mr. Wasson lived to the age of sixty-five years "and was universally respected."

Samuel McQuilkin was another prominent tavern keeper in the early days of the village. It is claimed by some that he built the first tavern on the northeast corner of Third and Main streets. It was a large two story frame with its big sign post. On the sign was painted a war horse fully caparisoned, and rearing as if impatient to get into the battle. Mr. William Earle, in his much quoted letter says: "We boys always called the McQuilkin house 'The Light Horse tavern.'" There are no dates given, but it is understood that Mr. McQuilkin sold the building and invested in lands across the river where Macksvillle now stands, which is the town laid out by Mr. Samuel McQuilkin and named McQuilkinsville, but for short has ever been known as Macksville. As to the question of which was the first tavern erected, Mr. Lucius H. Scott speaks from personal knowledge when he says as quoted above: "It," that is the Redford House, "was the first tavern ever opened in Terre Haute." At the same time it is recorded that the McQuilkin House was a rival to the Eagle and Lion.

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Vigo County Public Library

To throw some light on the expense of traveling at this early date, it may be noted here, that in licensing taverns, the County commissioners fixed the rates for a single meal at twenty-five cents; and a night's lodging at twelve and a half cents. For a horse, stable and hay for one night was twenty-five cents; oats and corn were extra.

In 1819 it is recorded that George Kilpatrick was licensed to keep a tavern; also tavern keeper's license was granted the same year to James Cunningham. Indicating the growth of the village and of ideas as well, the name tavern, sooner or later, was superseded by that of Hotel, or House. Hence there was the well known Dole House, kept by William Dole, the proprietor; Stewart House with Matthew Stewart as proprietor. Besides these were the National Hotel, kept by William McFadden, the old Early Hotel and the Wabash Hotel. All these had their necessary creaking sign boards, hospitable stables, and roomy wagon yards. Last but not least, each had a little belfry on the top of the house, with its high-toned bell, which called the willing boarders, three times a day, to their meals. The ringing of the tavern bell must have been an important function at least at the Burton Hotel, kept by Johnny Burton, an Englishman, on the Northeast corner of Cherry and Fifth streets. Burton must have been the most popular landlord of his time, since his name has been perpetuated in song by the darky minstrels of the day. I quote a single stanza as it has lingered in my memory from that day to this:

"I comes to Terre Haute
And puts up at Burton's hotel,
I blacks de Gemmen's boots
And rings de dinnah bell."

In 1838 Mr. Chauncey Rose completed the Prairie House. His plans were kept back till he began the work of building, when the villagers shook their heads in doubt; some said: "It is too far from the center of town." Others prophesied: "That boarders would not walk so far for their meals."

Community Affairs File

Beckwith, H.W. History of Vigo and Parke Counties 1880

West Terre Haute

Malcom was the first road supervisor, and John Ray was the first inspector of elections; they were appointed by the county commissioners on May 9, 1820. John Reese was the first justice of the peace; he was chosen at an election (the first held in the township) held at the house of John Ray on the first Saturday in June. It is said that Daniel Kuykendall was the first child born. The first saw-mill was built by James Sturgess, in 1820, on the S.W. ¼ of Sec. 24, T. 12, R. 9 W. About this time James Bennett built a grist-mill on the N.W. ¼ of Sec. 30, T. 12, R. 9 W., and some time after connected with it an oil-mill and carding machine, and on the same section, in 1824, built the first brick house. In 1831 Joseph Malcom was granted permission to establish and keep a public ferry over the Wabash river, now known as Cox's ferry. In the autumn of 1846 George Broadhurst sank the first coal shaft, in the S.W. corner of the S.W. ¼ of Sec. 19, T. 12, R. 9 W. Previous to this date coal had been dug at different places, but no regular mining for profit was carried on until Mr. Broadhurst had sunk his shaft.

TOWNS.

Macksville, named after its founder, Samuel McQuilkin, is located in a fertile plain one mile west of Terre Haute; when the land was surveyed into lots is now unknown. The plat was recorded November 23, 1836. In 1833 the first dwelling house was built within what three years later became the legal boundaries of the present town. About one or two years later Samuel McQuilkin opened a store and Smith Finch a tavern. These institutions were largely patronized by those who were employed in the construction of the National Road, which was wending its way westward through the site of the future metropolis of Sugar Creek township. The town has now a population of 250; two stores which do a fair business, blacksmith and wheelwright shop for custom work, saw-mill, shingle machine and cigar factory. Its manufactures, therefore, consist of lumber, shingles and cigars, and the present strongly indicates that in the near future grape wine will be added. Vegetable gardening is a growing and profitable interest. In the autumn of 1867 John Griggs and his son Edward erected a custom flour-mill, and in the following spring commenced grinding. They continued to run the mill successfully until August 8, 1870, when it was struck by lightning and entirely consumed by fire. There is no church edifice in the town and but one organized religious society, which is Methodist Episcopal, with a membership of sixty-seven. It holds its meetings in the public school-house, located near the center of the town. This society has connected with it a prosperous Sabbath-school which holds its sessions each Sabbath morning in the school-

Community Affairs File

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house. There is also a Union Sabbath-school in good working order, which occupies the public school-house each Sabbath afternoon. These organizations are working harmoniously and doing much to aid the cause of christianity. During the past few years, at different times, saloons have been licensed to vend alcoholic liquors, but in a very short time were compelled to cease their traffic because of the radical temperance sentiment which prevails almost universally.

The most notable event which has transpired in its history of forty-four years is the murder of Eva Peters, which was committed on the morning of March 15, 1875. Eva was an elderly maiden lady living alone in a small house in the village. Who her murderers are will probably never be known; what the motives were which impelled them to commit the horrible deed are yet a mystery to the community. Miss Peters had deposited in bank in Terre Haute a few dollars, the earnings of toil which she was saving to be expended to give her a "christian burial." This money she drew out of the bank the day before she was murdered. The possession of this small sum is supposed to be the incentive to the commission of the bloody crime; if so, the murderers were disappointed, for the money was found, after the body was discovered, concealed in her bed.

Bloomtown is a village of fifty inhabitants six miles west of Terre Haute on the Paris road, and a half mile north of the Vandalia railroad. It is located in a rich and extensive bottom, through which the waters of Sugar creek flow. It was laid out in 1858 by Hiram Bloom, after whom it was named. When Mr. Bloom settled here is not ascertained. He is reputed to have been a very active and enterprising man. In the earlier days of Bloomtown a saw-mill, and in later years a merchant flour-mill, were the pride of the villagers. The mills were destroyed by fire. The dates of their founding or destruction we could not ascertain definitely. For a number of years the manufacture of lumber was a leading source of employment and revenue, as the bottom was densely covered with black-walnut timber. It contains a blacksmith shop, which is opened occasionally to the public, and one store, the proprietor of which is postmaster. The name of the post-office is Nelson. It has a semi-weekly mail.

St. Mary's is a village of 100 inhabitants adjacent to the community of the Sisters of Providence. Its site was never divided into town lots. It contains two stores, a cabinet, carpenter, blacksmith and cooper shop, and a fine brick church which was built in 1867 and cost $13,000. The only secular organization here is a St. Joseph's Total Abstinence Society, at one time numbering ninety members; it now numbers fifty. This society has accomplished much good, and its continuance should

1906 West Terre Haute Directory

are we new settlers to build our cabins?' The ever ready Mr. McQuilkin again solved the problem. He now conceived the idea of laying off a town about his store, and thus the soil could be tilled near the river and the farmers could live near together. Thus they would have the value and benefit of one another's company, opinions and help against the Indians.

So 'McQuilkinsville' was platted and the plat was acknowledged before C. Gilbert, recorder of Vigo county, November 22, 1836. Then the name was left to the mercy of the people, who, to economize matters, shortened it to 'Mac'sville.' Still, as it was difficult to write the apostrophe, it was left out and a 'k' was inserted in its place. So the name 'Macksville,' which was further corrupted to 'Maxville,' comes down to us.

Not only did the local residents support the McQuilkin store but also the construction gang who were slowly pushing the National road westward. It seems that either the work was carried on slowly at this point, or because of some delay, the workers had to take up their residence in Macksville for two or three years. This not only increased the trade of the store, but it also brought about the building of a tavern by Smith Hinch. This old structure is still standing at the northwest corner of Third street and National avenue, one of the few remaining landmarks of the town.

In 1872 Richard McIlroy built the first brick building of the town, the one in which he ran his general store until 1904. The first postoffice was installed three years later with Mr. McIlroy as postmaster, a position which he held for over twenty years. The name of the postoffice was changed to West Terre Haute in 1898. Warren Sanford is the present postmaster.

About 1890 began the development of the coal laden bluff west of the village and a few years later the first clay tile factory, Terre Haute Brick and Pipe company's plant, was built. Many of the leading citizens foresaw the boom in the near future and thought it advisable to incorporate the town. When the suggesstion was left to the people for discussion and decision, two factions sprang up. The one favoring incorporation called itself the Citizens,' and had for its ticket emblem a star. The other party was 'The People,' and at the top of the ticket was a bee-hive. A vote was taken August 14, 1894. The vote was 60 to 40 in favor of 'The Citizens.' So the town was incorporated and the name was changed to West Terre Haute. As 'The People' were still unwilling to lose control of public affairs, both parties still existed, and each put up a ticket of candidates for town officials. The election was held Tuesday, September 4, 1894. Again 'The People' were defeated and faction ceased to exist.

The town, having been divided into three wards, Dr. Richard Belt, Dr. John S. Hunt and Chester R. Church were elected councilmen of the three consecutive districts. George Moeck was chosen town clerk, Richard McIlroy, treasurer, and John Snack, marshal. All of these men were elected by 'The Citizens.'

The newly elected trustees held their first meeting September 6, 1894.

Community Affairs File

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WEST TERRE HAUTE (scattered site district)

The history of West Terre Haute, formerly "McQuilkinsville" and later simply "Maxville", reveals in striking fashion the distinctive features and shifting fortunes of the Vigo County economy through the years. Laid off in November, 1836, by Samuel McQuilkin who had founded a general store on the National road between what are now Third and Fourth Streets, the town is located where U.S. 40 (the National road) and U.S. 150 intersect, two miles west of Terre Haute on the Wabash river flood plain. Coal-bearing bluffs rise immediately to the north and west; there are large deposits of gravel and clay; and the Pennsylvania railroad tracks go east and west through town.

McQuilkin's store prospered first from the patronage of both the construction gangs working on the National road and then from the people who settled in the land nearby to cultivate vegetable gardens in the fertile soil of the river bottom. Soon, a man by the name of Smith Hinch had built a tavern on the northwest corner of Third Street and the National road. Richard McIlroy built his brick general store and post office in 1872 and six years later the town had a lumber mill, a shingle manufacturer, a cigar factory, and 250 residents.

West Terre Haute--its citizens having voted to change its name from Maxville in 1894--reached its peak of economic and population growth in 1906. In earlier years the town suffered from lack of employment opportunities and inaccessibility caused by periodic floods or washouts on the highway going east. Now the future seemed bright. Coal mining had begun in earnest in 1890 when William Broadhurst persuaded the Vandalia railroad to build a spur west of the river to his mine. By 1906 there were five coal mines served by railroads and six approached by wagons. The average daily output of these eleven mines was 2,000

Vigo County Public Library

SPC 711.4T Vigo Co. A Historical Summary, William Pickett

tons. Later the Indiana State Bureau of Mines established their emergency rescue station in West Terre Haute. The town also benefitted from its large clay deposits. There were four clay products industries producing building brick, paving brick, drain tile and sewer pipe. They included the Terre Haute Brick and Pipe Company--also known as the Vitrified Brick Company--the Vigo Clay Company, the Miller Brick Company, and the National Drain Tile Company. In addition, lying just one half mile north of town was what one historian called the largest "bed of good gravel in the state". The gravel pit operating there was a mile wide and over a half mile in length. The gravel was used mainly for railroad grades. With so many new jobs, the population virtually exploded increasing more than sixfold from approximately 500 in 1896 to 3500 in one decade.

The new industries required more efficient transportation between Terre Haute and its western neighbor for commuting workers, so in 1905 a new bridge across the Wabash was completed. The Terre Haute Traction and Light Company laid trolley car tracks on it, providing the only streetcar and inter-urban service across the river south of Lafayette. The rapid pace of business activity stimulated the establishment of the Bank of West Terre Haute in 1905. The first city directory was published the following year.

Even after the decline of the coal, clay, and gravel industries beginning in the early 1920s, West Terre Haute remained almost entirely a residential community for white miners and factory workers. During the years following the Depression, the chief businesses in town were repairing and servicing automobiles and selling groceries, but these diminished when Interstate highway 70 circumvented the town to the south. The gravel pit became a lake for swimming and fishing. In 1980 the population was 2800.

West Terre Haute
(CAF)

Community Affairs File

MACVILLE, SUGAR CREEK TOWNSHIP

1. See Samuel McQuilkin
2. First dwelling, 1833
3. Samuel McQuilkin opened store in 1833 or 1834
4. Macville platted November 22, 1836. Recorded November 23, 1836.
5. Noble's Plat, June 1, 1857. Recorded July 6, 1857.
   Part of East ½ of S E ¼ of Sec. 19, T12N,R9W.
6. Johnson and Miller's addition,April 1, 1874.
   S. W ½ of Sec, T12N, R9W.
7. Goodman and Hirschler's addition, May 25, 1874.
   All of Sec. 19. (South of Macville), T12N, R9W.
8. Williams Plat, November 23, 1876. Thirty acres subdivision.
   North side of N E ¼ of N E ¼ of Sec 30, T12N, R9W.

(typed from handwritten copy, June 5, 1982)
Historical Society Files

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VIGO COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY
TERRE HAUTE, INDIANA

HISTORICAL SKETCH OF WEST TERRE HAUTE

History buffs may be well aware that Indiana was truly Indian territory. The area now known as Vigo County belonged to the Miami Indians, actually the Wabash Indians, three bands of which included the Miamis, the Weas, and the Piankeshaws. The Piankeshaws had a village on Sugar Creek which they cal ed Pun-go-se-co-ne or "Water of Many Sugar Trees".

Later, about 1790, the fierce Pottawatomies swept into the Wabash area where the Miamis shared their territory with them. The Kickapoos also came down from the north about 1796, settling near Clinton. Even later the Shawnees moved into the area.

White settlers began moving into Indiana from the South and East settling along rivers and creeks. In 1800 all of the state was included in one county, Knox County. By 1816, the year the State of Indiana was admitted to the Union, there were about fifteen counties recorded. Presently Indiana has 92 counties.

In the land register of Vincennes, a deed was recorded on April 18, 1817 giving Philomer T. Dean 260 acres of land situated on the high knoll across the river from Terre Haute. On this spot the original town of Macksville was destined to stand.

During President James Monroe's administration, the National Road was being pushed through to the Mississippi River. "Westward Ho!" was the cry. Settlers poured in with little clearings soon dotting the wilderness. Terre Haute was quite distant from many pioneers. The Wabash had to be crossed by ferry or by ford. High waters often extended the river to the high knoll that marked the eastern side of what we now call West Terre Haute. Crossing during flood periods was extremely dangerous. A trading post was needed.

Samuel McQuilkin, who now owned Mr. Dean's tract of land, was the first to take advantage of the need. In 1833 he erected a rude, strong, frame building and in 1834 opened a store in the same structure. The house stood

etween Third and Fourth Street on what is now National Avenue or U. S. 40. New emigrants began to cultivate the fertile "bottoms" east and south of the store. Where to build? Mr. McQuilkin had again solved the problem by laying off a town around his store. McQuilkinsville had been platted and recorded November 22, 1832, by Curtis Gilbert, Vigo County recorder. The name was shortened to Mac'sville; later the apostrophe was dropped and a "k" inserted. So Macksville, or sometimes Maxville, came into being.

Many construction workers on the National Road project took up residence McQuilkin's store sold slabs of meat, coarse meal, and lots of whiskey, too. The first tavern was built by Mr. Smith Hinch, on the northwest corner of Third and National where Dick Morris's Shell Station later was to stand, presently operated by Lester Beel.

The first school in the whole township was opened by Mrs. McQuilkin in the rear of her husband's store. The school was maintained by popular subscription. The first township elections were also held in this same building. Later another store was established by Robert McIlroy. The McIlroy family provided much for the new community. One of our streets still carries the McIlroy name. Mrs. Gertrude Joab McIlroy taught English at the high school in the early 1930's. Her husband, Harry McIlroy, owned a wholesale grocery in the building where the Young Men's Club still meets. The first McIlroy building, however, was erected in 1872, the first brick building on Paris Avenue, built by Richard McIlroy. The first post office was installed there with Richard McIlroy as postmaster, a position he filled for over twenty years. The name of the Macksville post office was changed to West Terre Haute in 1898.

Many of the original homes in West Terre Haute were log cabins, but all have disappeared. In the 1850's Josiah Adgerton built the first blacksmith shop on lot 70 on National Avenue and made the first steel plow used on the National Road. In 1867 John Griggs erected the first flour mill which burned in 1872. Just north of Paris Avenue, where the lumber company

is now located, Mr. Jones built the first steam saw mill. Not far from where Valley High was later built, there was a brick yard.

Just after the Civil War in 1870, the first Sunday School in Macksville was organized in a little frame school building erected by Erastus Church. This school building was located on the north side of the railroad tracks. Reverend Benson Rippetoe had the honor of conducting the first religious service in the building. In the day school Ellen Broadhurst, Henry McNeary, and John Van Cleave had the task at different times of teaching the three "R's

In 1875 while Sunday School was in session, the building was struck by lightning, frightening everyone present. John Peacock, the superintendent, was quite ruffled. The damage was soon repaired, and the building remained in use until the Vandalia Railroad acquired the land north of the railroad track. The building was then moved to the site where the high school later stood. It served as a school for many years. It stood until 1881 when it was replaced by a brick building which stood until 1908, being replaced that year by the much larger West Terre Haute High School, later more popularly known as Valley High School.

The National Road was built through Macksville to Terre Haute. It was a dangerous road west from the river bridge. The road from Terre Haute to West Terre Haute was called "Death Lane". It was dangerous in daylight, and even more so after dark. The grade was 20 - 30 feet high and only half that wide on top, with no guard rails. Two wagons hardly could pass each othe other. In 1879 Dr. Link, hurrying to a patient in West Terre Haute, was thrown from the top of the grade, breaking his arm in the 30 foot fall.

In 1880 on April 1 a wagon carrying fourteen people on their way to a revival meeting in West Terre Haute was thrown off the trestle on the grade, and two persons were drowned in the high waters. The party had left the covered bridge across the Wabash. The night was dark, a light mist falling. Willow trees on both sides of the grade made the drive dark even on clear nights. Visibility was limited to a few feet on April 1. Joseph Ellison

was the driver, hired to provide his express wagon for the group. The wagon slipped and fell, rolling down the north side of the grade into the rising river. Ella Hanna, age 17, and Mrs. George Otterman, age 30, wife of a Terre Haute policeman, died in the mishap. One of the horses drowned and Mr. Ellison rode the other to shore after carrying two women to shore. The rest of the party was rescued, including Mr. and Mrs. Hanna.

Later, the longest cement guard fence in the state was poured, providing protection to travelers on the "grade". Remnants of this cement guard fence still form part of the railing along the present grade, on its north side, now widened to a four-lane highway.

A new bridge, built at a cost of $271,000, was dedicated on October 17, 1905. The West Terre Haute band furnished music for the occasion. This is the same bridge we still use to reach the city of Terre Haute. Another bridge had previously replaced the old Ohio Street Bridge and was built at the foot of Main Street or Wabash Avenue. The stone for the piers and abutments came from a quarry near the old Darwin Road, about ten miles south of Terre Haute. Other stones came from the Putnamville stone quarry.

It is difficult to recount all the stories of West Terre Haute. Churches sprang up in the community. The Congregational Church was organized in 1884. Dr. Hunt, J. M. Fields, and Mr. Corning saw the need and the first church was built in 1885 on the site of the present Bethany United Church of Christ at Church and Miller Avenue. The first pastor was James Hayes. The cornerstone was placed by Captain Potter of Terre Haute on June 9, 1885. The original church was replaced in 1907 by the present edifice.

The Methodist Episcopal Church was organized in 1897, and a building was erected at Third and Johnson Avenue in 1900. Chief founders included Alice Belt, wife of Dr. Belt; Mollie Miller; and Frances Mopps. The First Baptist Church was organized about 1909 with a building erected a few years later at Fifth and Poplar Street. This building was replaced with the present church dedicated in 1968. The first pastor at the Baptist Church

was James Weeks. Later, the United Brethern Church was built at Sixth and Poplar Street.

Other early churches included the Pilgrim Holiness Church located on South Eighth Street, pastored by Rev. Wheeldon. Also the Missionary Bands Church at Sixth and Edward Street, with Pastor House and Pastor Jones as early ministers. The First Assembly of God Church located near Seventh and National, was built in the 1930's with Archie Brown as its first pastor. St. Leonard's Catholic Church on North Eighth Street has also been an important part of the community.

Grover Jones, a popular author from West Terre Haute, often wrote about his early life in West Terre Haute and mentioned its many churches, as well as its plentiful taverns. At one time West Terre Haute was called the largest town in the nation. Most communities of its size were incorporated as cities with mayors. West Terre Haute is still guided by a town board, composed of three members.

In 1880 the town had a population of 250; two stores, a blacksmith and wheelright shop, a saw mill, a shingle machine, and a cigar factory. In 1895 the population was 500. Ten years later in 1905, there were 3500 inhabitants. In 1920 the town was rated at 4380, a high mark. Present figures are approximately 2870.

Many businesses have been part of the community. Davis Diner, owned by popular Dick Davis, was a gathering place for the youth of the town. Dodge Drug Store, with friendly Ed Dodge, was another focal point. His drug store was originally the Niece Drug Store which had served also as a meeting place for many people, especially because they had a good ice cream parlor, part of the store. Berry's Drug Store, with the excellent George Berry as owner, also provided much medical advice and medication, along with ice cream and sundries. Cassaday's on the corner of Paris and McIlroy, across from the present-day Joy's Restaurant was probably one of the first drug stores, owned by the venerable Burton Cassaday. Cassaday Lane, southwest of the town,

still carries the Cassaday name. The Curry family, still a part of the West Terre Haute community, were relatives. Mrs. Essie Earle Curry, well-known teacher and political activist, lived with the Cassadays, her uncle and aunt.

Businesses and grocery stores included the Miners Company Store, Cary Cooper's, Ferrell's, Mann's, Simonson's, Pedlar's, Wheeldon's, Lake's, Newburn's, Richardson's, Price's, Hurst's, McIlroy's, Astier's, Tavern's, Pugno's, Durand's, Owens' and Seal's; also Combs', and Beach's meat markets.

Today Tex Day's occupies Price's Store and Hagemeyers is located near the sites of Hurst's and Pedlar's. BillJoy's Restaurant occupies the old Wheeldon Grocery Building. Dodge Drugs still stands; but Jerry's Restaurant and Bar, a popular gathering place for young blades about town, is gone, replaced by the John Heyen American Legion Post. Jerry Menestrina was the owner of Jerry's Corner and was a power to be reckoned with in West Terre Haute, and was also counted as a friend by many persons. Alex Menestrina, one of his three sons, was a teacher, principal, and later superintendent of the high school. The present branch library at Seventh and National was originally a fashionable bar and restaurant built by Max Menestrina, also one of Jerry Menestrina's sons.

Hurst's Hardware located at 7th and National became Ace Hardware, now owned by Bill Kulinski and Floyd Riggs.

The barber shops were also an integral part of the town. There was Dick Williams' shop, where "Fat" Keys was so popular, as well as Dick. Wefler's Shop and Brackall's, also Joe Mooter's, later Jerry Wilson's, had their patrons and friends. Today we have Humphrey's Shop at 8th and National and Lance Grubb's, next door to Dodge's, both excellent shops. Several beauty shops later appeared, including Hilda Miller's, Jane Long's, Martis's, Genevieve Black's, Pauline Lake's, just to mention a few. Presently we have June Doolittle's, Shirley Lake's, and Mrs. Frank's, among others.

After Macksville became officially West Terre Haute, the town was quite

a mining town, attracting miners from distant places. Many French, Scotch, English and Welsh immigrant families, such as the Bernards, Wautelets, Daniels Reillys, McAllisters, and Armstrongs moved into the area to enrich the community with their skills, talents, and rich cultural backgrounds. The sounds of mine whistles echoed throughout the town in early evening, sounding whether the miners were to work the following day. The wildcat howl from the Wizard and the blasts of the various mines were easily recognized by the workers. Early morning and afternoons saw many men in overalls dressed for the mines with their caps and attached carbide lamps, trudging the streets. Mines included the Deep Vein, Black Betty, National, Dresser, Victory, Wabash Riverside, Wizard, Sunbeam, Sugar Valley, Submarine, Bardike, Black Hawk, Pimento, and Green Valley.

Today, most of the mines are gone. The Dresser Power Plant is hardly a memory. Valley High School, South and Central Schools are gone, replaced by West Vigo High School and West Vigo Elementary, the latter being located in the south part of West Terre Haute on the Mopps farm.

Businesses and industries have come and gone. Once there was the American Tile Company and Vigo Tile producing clay products. Terre Haute Vitrified Brick operated north on Route 150. The Mushroom Plant for several years occupied the American Tile Company property in Toad Hop. Later the property was destroyed by fire.

George Splaty's Hardware was in business in the early years near Church and Paris Avenue, later moving to the corner of Third and Paris, where today it is owned and operated by the Gropp family. Next door was the Miller Drug Store and on the second floor Hilda Miller had her beauty shop.

The old Palace Theater, just west of the firehouse, was a popular movie house, but also presented plays, operettas, amateur contests, and even prize fights. Dick Williams' shop adjoined this building.

Always, West Terre Haute citizens have been intensely loyal to their town and are proud to live in the "largest little town in the world". The

lame Macksville has re-appeared in the Macksville Gazette, a local newspaper, and Macksville Station, a furniture refurbishing business. West Terre Haute has its own police department and street department housed in the West Terre Haute Town Hall. The West Terre Haute fire department is now part of the West Terre Haute Volunteer Fire Department servicing the town and also the Sugar Creek township area. Of historical interest, the first modern fire engine was purchased in 1922. Mrs. Essie Earle Curry, teacher at Valley, directed an operetta entitled "A Modern Cinderella". Proceeds were contributed to the West Terre Haute fire department for the first fire truck.

Plans for a sewer system and a TV cable system are in the making for the early 1980's. The year 1982 marks the 150th anniversary year of McQuilkinsville, or Macksville, or better yet, West Terre Haute, a name that came into being about 1898.

West Terre Haute has produced many well-known medical doctors of whom we may be proud. Dr. Belt, Dr. Hunt, and Dr. Mapes were early physicians. Then came such outstanding men as Dr. Ernest Mattox, Dr. Ezra Haslem, Dr. Shanklin, Dr. White, Dr. Rogers, and Dr. Rufus Danner, to name a few. Dentists included Dr. McFarland and Dr. Sloan. Of interest to many is the fact that West Terre Haute High School also produced several doctors who have practiced in various areas of the state and nation. These include Drs. Loren Schmidt, Fred Dierdorf, John Pedlar, Wayne Crockett, Dale Davidson, and Larry Morris.

WEST TERRE HAUTE'S GODSEYVILLE

A well-known section of West Terre Haute was known as Godseyville, named after the Godsey family who lived and owned property there. The area lay north of Paris Avenue and east of Market Street or Route 150, on the south side of the railroad tracks.

Well-known families once lived in the Godseyville area, including the Menestrinas, Bernards, Cassagnes, Pussolts, Paytons, and many others.

As the years passed, these families moved elsewhere in the town and the area deteriorated and is largely only a memory although the area is stilled called Godseyville and sometimes Railroad Avenue.

HISTORY OF DEAR OLD VALLEY

The West Terre Haute High School building was constructed in 1908 on the site located at the corner of Church and Johnson Street in West Terre Haute. That year of 1908 saw twenty-five students enrolled in high school. Actually, the high school began in September, 1906, in a little old brick building which also housed the grade school students. Mr. W. R. Lambethas, the first superintendent, was also the principal and entire faculty! In 1909 George Grosjean became head of the faculty. By 1910 forty-three students were enrolled, and that year the West Terre Haute High School received its first commission from the State Board of Education. Kate Black and Katherine Rogers joined the faculty. Two of the charter pupils graduated at the end of the school year; they were Sadie Craft and Ray Irwin, class of 1911, the first graduating class. From this time the growth of the school was steady and rapid.

In 1913 T. V. Pruiett was elected superintendent with Helen Ross as principal. The faculty numbered eight members, among them Horace Powell, science; the "ideal" teacher, Hazel Shortridge, mathematics; and Zelpha B Burkett, English. Eighteen students graduated in 1915.

Because of increased enrollment, the Annex was built in 1914 and immediately was re-named the "Dog-House" by the high-school students.

In 1916 Glenn Brown became head of the high-school department, located on the top floor of the building. Lower grades were housed on the main floor and lower levels of the building. Home economics was taught in the narrow section adjoining the furnace and boiler room, with manual training classes also taught at the basement level. Principal Brown served only one year then accepted a position in Muncie. In 1916 the senior class numbered twenty-seven, dropping to sixteen in 1917. Carl Wise Holler assumed teachin duties in 1918.

The first World War found changes in the curriculum, as well as the

faculty. German, a highly popular subject, was dropped completely. Latin was still taught, but in 1918 Carl Holler was hired to teach French, which replaced the German. Mr. Holler also served as principal. The class of 1918 had thirty members. Mr. Holler and Mr. Royer left in 1919 to serve their country; Anna Piepenbrink, of the "Eagle Eyes", went to Washington, D. C., to serve in government work; and Miss Jessie Wolford became principal. In 1922 Mr. Holler became superintendent, and Ivan Noblitt served as principa Mr. Pruiett resigned in 1922 to become professor of social science at the Normal School in LaCrosse, Wisconsin.

In 1922 the design of Valley class rings was selected by students, faculty, and alumni. The design was a triple-mounted seal ring bearing the school monogram, which was octagonal in form and slightly in relief. Each class had the appropriate year. The Class of 1923 was the first class to purchase the newly designed rings, which were used thereafter until the last class graduated in 1960.

So went the early years of Valley, officially the West Terre Haute High School. School spirit was always exceptionally high. "Purple and Gold" were the school colors. The "Echo" was the title of the school's year book. The Alumni Association of the high school was organized in 1915. The Alumni Association took a very active role in school affairs and each May during Commencement Week, provided a reception and dinner for the graduating seniors always a very gala affair.

At Valley or the West Terre Haute High School, athletics played an important part in the extra-curricular program. Although hampered by the lack of a gymnasium, a large percentage of the student body showed a desire to do all in their power to give athletics a boost. Teams were organized for boys and girls, open to the entire student body. The program first consisted of basketball, baseball, swimming, and later, some track. The gym and pool at the First Baptist Church in Terre Haute were rented, also the upper floor of the Trueblood Building across the street from the Berry Drug Store at Church and Paris Avenue. In 1920 the school became a member

of the State Athletic Association.

All teams did remarkable well, but in 1923 West Terre Haute High School became a state champion. Girls' basketball was a big thing in the 20's, and the little high school had one of the finest and best girl teams in the country. After winning the sectional, they went on to win the state championship. Members of this terrific team were Eleanor Daniels, Emma Damart, Isabel Emrick, Katherine Wrightson, Veneita Boots, Jessie Snack, and Margaret Earhart. Their coach was Carrie Sorrell. The team were short in stature, tall in spirit, and bedazzled the entire state with their speed and amazing handling of the ball in competition, winning all their games that year. For two years this magnificent group of girls had charmed the entire Wabash Valley.

From its early years the high school was greatly interested in music and drama. Operettas were given each year. Under Mr. Holler's guidance Le Cercle Français was organized, providing cultural opportunities to its members. The club continued later under the direction of one of the finest French teachers in the state, Amelia Bernard Gilmour, who taught French and history from 1930 to 1960. Other clubs contributed much to the social and cultural life of students. In 1923 the Blue Triangle (or Y-Teens) was founded and over the years provided parties, camping, opportunities to attend operas, visit parks and cities. The club was sponsored for many years by Vivian Sinclair Cornett, who served as sponsor from 1929 until she resigned in 1953 to teach in Terre Haute.

Other clubs included the Latin Club, Future Homemakers of America, Athenaeum Literary Society, History Club, F. B. A., and Big Sister Club; also the Valley Vamps, Peppy Peppers, and the Sub-Debs, the last three being student organized.

Valley, and also the elementary schools, had very active supportive P. T. A. groups which provided channels of communication for parents, faculty, and students. These groups also contributed financial support for

hool equipment and programs.

The Commerce Department came into being in the fall of 1926 with Rose B. Heyen as teacher. In 1929, Virginia Fox Tyree was hired as the business teacher and made the department outstanding. In 1932, following the resignation of Miss Fox, Margaret Gleason taught business. She taught one year and was followed in 1933 by Alex Menestrina, who provided first class training and served as business teacher until 1954 when he took a year off to go to I. S. U. to teach.

Violet Stogsdill Cline taught English and Speech from 1931 to 1960. Gladys Rollings was effective in teaching mathematics, as well as Latin and English. Iva Price taught math and later taught home economics from 1930 to 1960. Vivian Sinclair Cornett taught social studies.

Guy Nicholson came to Valley as coach, math teacher, and principal in 1932 and remained to serve as superintendent after J. K. McCarter retired in 1939. Ward Crites had served as coach before "Nick" and Donn Eastabrook took over in the late 30's and early 40's. Other coaches over the years included Delbert Chezem, Letsinger, Woodburn, "Doc" Franklin, Lucas, Campbell, Leo Kirby, "Casey" Decker, and Frank Clift.

Undoubtedly the most colorful coach was Eastabrook, or "Eastie". He named the team the Bob Cats and helped to create a new school song, "The Bob Cat Team Song". Under his direction, excellent teams were developed.

The decade of the 30's began with the Big Depression. Valley was deeply in debt when Sup't. McCarter came on the scene. Under his astute and rigid schedule by 1934 the debt was paid. J. K. McCarter also managed to obtain federal WPA funds for a gymnasium to serve also as a community center. It was built and dedicated in 1935, providing at last a home for physical education, a stage for dramatic productions, an office for the coaches, and classrooms for home economics.

In 1934 the junior class began the "Valley Chatter", sponsored by Dan Eggleston and Gertrude Lotze. The news sheet was issued once a month,

with special issues for commencements and other important occasions. The Chatter continued publication until the closing of the high school. A Press Club, under the direction of Paul Justice, became quite active in this journalistic effort.

No history of Valley would be complete without recounting the history of the annual Oratoricals. This contest was organized in 1914 and ended forever in 1930. The first Oratoricals awarded prizes in music and speech. Later it became a speech contest. T. V. Pruiett and Mr. Huntley were responsible for the origin. Mr. Huntley, a former W. T. H. citizen, awarded ten dollars in gold to the winner. Later in 1919 this became a gold key, provided by Daniel V. Miller. Some winners included Hubert Huebner, 1916; Alice Myers, 1917; Crystal Kern, 1918; Mary Newland, 1919; Violet Stogsdill, 1927; Dan Eggleston, 1928; and Inza Schmidt, 1930. Oratoricals were held at the Bethany Church or at the Victory Theater on Paris Avenue where the Calvary Church presently meets.

The 1940's were war years again. World War II saw dozens of graduates and students entering the armed forces. Some were never to return, including Jack Martin shot by a sniper in New Guinea; Wayne Runnels and Johnnie Smith, killed in the Battle of the Bulge, 1945; Bill McFarlin and "Pete" Whitesell, lost in bombing runs over Germany. Valley boys served around the world: Major Randall Wise in England; Bill Alumbaugh in Italy; Wes Stafford, New Guinea; Harry Whitesell and Harry Ranney, France; Bill Cline, Persia or Iran; Dick Price, India; Gene Blackburn, Germany; Chet Bower and George Edwardson, England. Dozens of others served in the army, air force, infantry, navy, and marines, winning medals and Purple Hearts in the process.

Back home in Indiana in 1940 Dick Davis built his new addition to the restaurant, one of the most popular spots after school and after games. Ed Dodge and Dick Davis were two of Valley's most ardent supporters and fans throughout the years.

The 1940 decade had other big moments. In 1943 Valley was severely damaged by fire. Destruction of much of the interior required months to

repair. Classes met in the annex, the gymnasium, and the Bethany Congregational Church. Then came the great 1943 flood with much of the town inundated and schools closed. That same year Miss Sinclair was severely injured in a fall outside the Annex that nearly cost her life.

In the decade of the 40's Inza Owens as Music Director presented, in 1945, the first giant all-school Christmas program. In 1946 she directed the first Spring Festival with a Festival Queen and Court, a maypole, and beautiful themes. These annual events continued until 1960 when Valley closed its doors. Many teachers, students, and parents were involved, making both events high lights of every school year.

The 1950's saw Valley returning to a more normal existence but as the decade neared the end, a dream came true that really rang a bell for Valley. In 1957 West Terre Haute and Sugar Creek Township became the Metropolitan School District of West Vigo with Alex Menestrina as superintendent. Valley continued until the West Vigo High School was completed. The last class to graduate from Valley was the class of 1960. All other high-school students entered West Vigo in the fall.

A few years later the building was razed, also the Annex. The gymnasium is presently in use as a very popular Community Center.